

CCC Interview with Raymond Mulholland

Date: July 2, 2007 – 10:00AM

Location: New Albin, Iowa

Interviewer: Jessica Rundlett

DNR: Where is your hometown?

Raymond: Hometown? I was raised in Lansing.

DNR: And how would you get home from the CCC camp?

Raymond: Hitchhike, or my Dad would come down to get us. We wasn't allowed to have a car, but once in a while a guy would have a car down there.

DNR: How often did you get to go home?

Raymond: I was home quite often – a couple times a month probably.

DNR: How old were you when you joined the CCC?

Raymond: Eighteen.

DNR: What were you doing before you joined the CCC?

Raymond: School.

DNR: Just in high school?

Raymond: High school, yeah.

DNR: Did you go into the CCC right after you graduated?

Raymond: Yeah, I graduated in the spring it was and went into the CCC that fall.

DNR: Why did you join the CCC?

Raymond: It was the only thing you could do in those days. A whole \$30 a month. We got to keep ten of it. Twenty of it went home.

DNR: How did you hear about the CCC?

Raymond: I liked it real good. I hated to leave it. It was good.

DNR: How did you first find out about the CCC?

Raymond: Through different people that was in it. I really can't tell ya.

DNR: What camp were you assigned to?

Raymond: McGregor. I think 1774 was the number of the camp. – I'm not sure though. It was McGregor. I don't have any pictures of that camp. I ended up in this one, there in Cherokee, Iowa.

DNR: Are those your patches from your uniform?

Raymond: Yeah, CCC. I don't think we wore 'em though. We moved from McGregor over here. The number of that camp was 1754. It might be the same number as McGregor I don't know. 1939.

DNR: Did you go to the camp in Cherokee in 1939?

Raymond: Late '39 or early '40, when they closed the one down in McGregor.

DNR: Are these all pictures that you took?

Raymond: Yeah, most of them. There's the inside of a CC camp barracks. That's in McGregor there. That's a girl there. That's one of the guys that run the camp. See, the camp was under the army control. I'm trying to find a picture here. Too many girls.

DNR: What are you going to do with those patches?

Raymond: Did you want one? Ever have one? I'll give you one.

DNR: Were the trucks pretty new or were they pretty old?

Raymond: Brand new, everything was new. There's a new truck right there. There's the kind of trucks we had.

DNR: There's a picture of going to work. Do you know where the camp was down in McGregor?

Raymond: No, no – that's something I was going to ask you about. You come from Marquette. McGregor and you hit the Catholic Church and you turn right. Just as you turn left, the camp was on the right side there. It was a park at one time. I don't know what it is now.

DNR: Was it out where the high school is now?

Raymond: Yeah, it'd be on this side of the high school.

Raymond: Here's when we was leaving McGregor – everyone in a caravan. Most of them went by train.

DNR: So you caravanned out to Cherokee?

Raymond: That's from McGregor to Cherokee.

Raymond: A friend of mine, her picture.

DNR: So that was your bunk in the barracks?

Raymond: That's where I slept.

Raymond: This is taken from McGregor Heights.

DNR: So is that the view from the town?

Raymond: No, just from the town there. McGregor Heights would be between Marquette and McGregor.

Raymond: There's kind of a crew we had when we were working. I can't remember what I'm looking for now. My memory is shot.

DNR: Well, you got lots of years of memories to keep track of.

Raymond: I can't remember. That was 68 years ago.

DNR: Do you remember what day it was that you went into the CCC?

Raymond: It was in the fall of 1938, I don't know just when though.

DNR: How long were you in for?

Raymond: As long as I could stay – two years. I really liked it.

DNR: So, was that four six month terms?

Raymond: Two years, all you could say. I think we had to sign up every six months.

DNR: Do you remember where you went to sign up?

Raymond: No.

DNR: How did you get from your home in Lansing to the camp in McGregor?

Raymond: There was a train, but my Dad would take me down most of the time. Then when one of the guys had a car down there – they wasn't allowed to have a car but they had a car though. We drove back and forth – he lived up here in New Albin.

DNR: So you rode with him?

Raymond: Yeah, once in a while.

DNR: How did he get to have a car when you weren't supposed to have one?

Raymond: You'd keep it hid somewhere. Nobody checked up there.

DNR: Do you remember where he hid it at?

Raymond: They knew that we knew a lot of stuff like that. We got \$30 a month. We got to keep ten, the rest of us went home. Most of our folks sent the twenty back to us. You could buy a bottle of milk for fifteen cents in those days too though.

DNR: Can you tell me what your first day at camp was like?

Raymond: No, but I can remember the first meal. I'll never forget the first meal. Down there, we had pork chops. Can you believe it or not, people were growling about it. I didn't hardly know what a pork chop was.

DNR: Really?

Raymond: When we was kids, once in a while we'd get half a weiner to eat or something. But, we never was on relief or nothin' though. The first time I had to work I got ten cents an hour.

DNR: Really? What was your first job? What was the job you got the ten cents and hour for?

Raymond: I was painting for a lumber yard. I think I got ten cents an hour.

DNR: How old were you then?

Raymond: I might've been in high school then – I'm not sure. Probably 17.

DNR: So can you tell me anything about the first few weeks you were in the camp? Maybe how things started or anything about the induction process?

Raymond: Not really – I really can't. I know I went down there and I knew a few of the guys there. I mixed right in with 'em. I didn't have no trouble at all.

DNR: Did you have to go to Fort Des Moines for an induction physical?

Raymond: No. Right down there, I think, I'm not positive.

DNR: Right at the camp in McGregor?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: Do you remember what kind of clothes they assigned you?

Raymond: Clothes? A lot of it, I think, was old World War I army clothes. We had pretty good clothes. Can't complain about that. Then we'd wear our own clothes when we went out of camp.

DNR: So, you just had to wear your uniform while you were working?

Raymond: I can't remember. We kind of wore the clothes we had.

Raymond: There's a view from Pikes Peak McGregor.

DNR: You can still see the railroad bridge down there today.

Raymond: Yeah. I can always remember that. I can't remember, we'd always look from that one point. They got a lookout there now. We'd look up that river and see that railroad bridge. I don't know if it's four miles.

DNR: I think it's close to four miles, because it's a ways across the river valley there.

Raymond: I know at one time, now this is taken down at Pikes Peak. That came from McGregor. This is McGregor. I don't know if that tower is still there or not.

DNR: No, the tower is gone.

Raymond: Do you remember where the tower was at? Do you know anything about it?

DNR: I think it was a tower that was built for the Chautauquas. The town held their Chautauqua festival. They had a Chatautauga festival every summer in August. They would have speakers come in, and I think that's what the tower was used for. But, the tower was still there when you were in camp?

Raymond: Yeah, I think so. I think I worked up there a couple times – on the state side of that. Does the city have a park there or something?

DNR: Maybe so. What did you do when you worked there?

Raymond: Just puttered around and cut weeds – stuff like that, I think.

DNR: I see. How many clothes did you get? Did you get like two shirts and one pair of pants?

Raymond: We had a couple pair of trousers – I just can't remember what our work trousers were like.

DNR: Looking for a picture?

Raymond: Here's a guy with work trousers on.

DNR: So, is that what your work uniform looked like?

Raymond: Yeah. Now, these look like everybody is dressed different here. And there, he's dressed up there. I think that's army trousers – I'm not sure though.

DNR: So, was this maybe like the dress uniform?

Raymond: Yeah, I think so.

DNR: And now, all the pictures of girls I see in here – are they just girls from town?

Raymond: Oh, this is my relation here. That's a girl I was sweet on.

DNR: Was she from McGregor?

Raymond: No, Lansing. There's the bridge in Lansing right there.

DNR: This is the bridge in Marquette.

DNR: Oh, that's the old twin suspension bridge?

Raymond: Uh huh.

DNR: Are some of these pictures with the writing on them, are they ones that you purchased?

Raymond: Yeah. That one I probably took.

DNR: These are very interesting. And there's the same girl again.

Raymond: Yeah, she and I was pretty good friends. This is taken in Marquette. See, there them guys look like army clothes on. I think we had khakis too, but I'm not sure though.

DNR: Did you work on projects up in Marquette too?

Raymond: No. Now, I was out on the farm, part of the time – building dams and stuff. Here's on of our bosses. That's inside of our barracks right there. That's in McGregor too. We had a little coal burning stove.

DNR: Was there just one stove to heat the building?

Raymond: Yeah, kind of cool.

DNR: Get pretty cold during the winter time?

Raymond: Yeah, see here's a guy in CC camp there with a motorcycle. He wasn't allowed to have it there, but nobody said nothing. I can't think of his name. The camp was run by the army.

DNR: Do you remember as the weather got colder did they give you more winter clothes?

Raymond: Yeah, I think they did. I can't really tell you though.

DNR: And then, when you got done with your two years did you get to keep your clothes or did you have to turn them in?

Raymond: I think they kept most of them.

DNR: Did you get a shaving kit?

Raymond: I think so.

DNR: What kind of personal items did you take with you when you went to camp?

Raymond: Just a shaving stuff and shoes and everything like that.

DNR: Was it pretty much just the clothes you had on and they gave you everything else?

Raymond: Yeah.

Raymond: Here's what I was doing here – surveying early farms. That's the kind of instrument we had and I ran that. I got a promotion. I got \$36 a month then.

DNR: And that was the promotion you got when you ran the surveyor?

Raymond: I got to be an assistant leader I think they called it.

DNR: Where were the farms you surveyed?

Raymond: Running fence lines and contours, we'd send our drawings into the office and they'd map out where the fences were supposed to go on contours.

DNR: What kind of equipment were you issued at the camp? For work, or personal items or anything?

Raymond: I really can't tell you. That's so darn long ago I can't remember.

Raymond: Now here's a bunch there, everyone is dressed different.

DNR: So maybe all the guys had different types of uniforms depending?

Raymond: I think, when we had retreats – see there I am sitting downtown with plain clothes on.

DNR: And is this one of the girls from McGregor?

Raymond: That's Cherokee. I think here name is Ruby Hatterman. I seen the name somewhere.

Raymond: There's one of our trucks. That's taken down near McGregor.

DNR: Is that in the quarry near McGregor?

Raymond: Yeah. I never worked around the quarries.

DNR: Do you know what the guys did at the quarries?

Raymond: Crushed rock and everything. Throw one rock at a time in the crusher. It went back and the crusher jaws would come together like this.

DNR: Now, you mentioned you weren't supposed to have cars and you weren't supposed to have motorcycles. Was there anything else you weren't allowed to keep?

Raymond: No, no whisky – stuff like that. But I never did touch it though.

DNR: Was there other guys that did?

Raymond: Oh I suppose. I don't know.

DNR: Do you know what happened to them if they got caught?

Raymond: Not too much I don't think.

DNR: So, you stayed in barracks at both camps – at McGregor and in Cherokee?

Raymond: Yeah. See, there's almost a new truck there – a GMC.

DNR: So, when you rode in the trucks did you just ride in the back?

Raymond: Yeah, there's no, just climb in that's all.

DNR: How did they assign the barracks?

Raymond: I really don't know. There's just different numbers. I don't know how I got put in my barracks. There was just an empty bunk there and they stuck me in there.

DNR: Do you remember how many people lived in each one?

Raymond: Oh gee. Thirty probably.

DNR: So they were pretty good.

Raymond: See, here's a guy who's got his suit on. Here's a picture from McGregor heights.

DNR: Did the bunks, did they have regular mattresses?

Raymond: Oh yeah, we had pretty good bunks.

DNR: Were they pretty comfortable?

Raymond: Yeah, I think. We was young then you know.

DNR: Were you supplied with bedding?

Raymond: Yeah, they supplied everything. Once a week we'd take our bedding and turn it in and they'd give us new clean stuff. See here's one of the guys. In bed. He got killed in the service. There's a kind of a grader there.

DNR: So this was like a road grader?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: Was it used for building new roads or what was it used for?

Raymond: I really don't know. I was never around it.

DNR: So, what was your job mostly?

Raymond: Surveying. I worked down there in the park for a little while, where that entrance there that says Pikes Peak – I think that was made down in Guttenberg. I'm not sure though.

DNR: This sign, you think it was made in Guttenberg?

Raymond: I think it was, I'm not positive.

DNR: Was it all built out of wood?

Raymond: Yeah, I'm not sure.

DNR: So it was made in Guttenberg and they just put it together at the park?

Raymond: Uh huh. I'm just guessing though. I can't remember putting it up really, but I know we put it up.

DNR: This sign is gone. We have a different one. I wonder what happened to it?

Raymond: A couple years ago I was down there in the park and I asked the ranger about that, and he said he's never seen one. That's why I brought the picture down.

DNR: Well, we sure appreciate it. So, you said that every week they would give you clean bedding?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: Do you remember who did the washing? Who washed all the bedding?

Raymond: They sent it in somewhere.

DNR: Can you describe what the bedding was like?

Raymond: Just the regular bedding they have nowadays. It was real good. I really liked it. I hated to get out.

DNR: Do you remember any of your bunkmates?

Raymond: Oh, my best friend was a guy by the name of ?.

Raymond: That's in Cherokee. That's quite the layout there. Down in McGregor everything was just jammed in one little area there.

Raymond: When I was in the CCC we'd sit down by the river there quite a bit.

DNR: And would you just watch the river?

Raymond: This bridge here was a toll bridge. You had to pay the toll on the other side of the river. Guys, they'd go over here then they'd climb down there in Prairie du Chien. I never did it.

DNR: Do you remember any or your bunkmates?

Raymond: Oh, I got some names wrote down here. This guy, Faye, we always called him Alice because Alice Faye was a movie star. Breitbach, Kelly and Valley. Earl Valley. I can't remember his name, he lives down in McGregor – I mean, this guy lives in Guttentberg. That guys Kelly, his name is. He got killed in the service.

DNR: Why is he wearing a barrel?

Raymond: I don't know. He's quite the joker – he's quite the guy.

DNR: Did the guys in the barracks get along pretty well?

Raymond: Oh yeah – never any trouble. I can remember one fight is all.

DNR: Do you remember what the fight was about?

Raymond: No. One of the guys name was Bill Tate. Yeah, I think it's Tate. No, not Tate, Pape it was. He and I was pretty good friends. I don't know why they got in a fight. I stay out of that stuff.

DNR: I see.

Raymond: I never was in a fight in my life.

DNR: Were there pranks? Did you play jokes on each other?

Raymond: Oh, not too much. I couldn't tell you for sure.

DNR: What was the food like? You mentioned your first meal.

Raymond: Food? I thought the food was real good. Like I said, they had pork chops. Some guys were raving. Somebody told me the same guys were half starving at home.

DNR: Did the CCC guys help in the kitchen?

Raymond: Yeah. I got a picture of the cooks here somewhere. There's the cooks right there.

DNR: Did they just get randomly assigned to be cooks?

Raymond: Yeah, you know there is really nothing to it though.

DNR: Did they cook every day?

Raymond: Yeah, they'd have different crews though so they'd have a day or two off. They had good chili. They had good meals, I can't complain.

DNR: What was a typical meal like?

Raymond: Oh, we had lots of chili and soups. I think we even had steaks, I'm not sure. I know we even had pork chops the first day.

DNR: Were there holiday meals? Special meals on holidays?

Raymond: I couldn't tell you.

DNR: Were you always home for those?

Raymond: I went home quite often. I only had thirty miles to go – I'd hitchhike home.

DNR: Were most of the guys in the camp from near McGregor?

Raymond: A lot of 'em from Dubuque. All over. We used to have reunions. I just can't remember anymore.

DNR: Did you grow or gain weight after you arrived at camp?

Raymond: I don't know – I don't think so no.

DNR: Did you come from a farm in Lansing before you went to the camp or how did you grow up?

Raymond: I lived right on the edge of town. I spent all my time on the river as a kid. We'd go what's called pollywoggin'. You know what that is?

DNR: No I don't.

Raymond: The water is so clear you can see the clamshells. We'd look for clamshells and they had a button factory in Lansing and we'd sell 'em the shells.

DNR: Do you remember how much you got for a shell?

Raymond: I think sometimes we made forty or fifty cents a week maybe. We done it just for the heck of it mostly. We done a lot of fishing.

DNR: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Raymond: Yeah, I had one sister. All together I had eight brothers. Everyone is gone now except me. I'm the only one left alive.

DNR: How did the depression affect your family?

Raymond: Not at all really I don't think. I'd go out and look for whiskey bottles and sell them for a nickel a piece. You could get a can of corn or something for that nickel. That dime I got, that was quite a treat.

DNR: What did your parents do?

Raymond: My Dad was a carpenter. My mother was a housewife. She worked in the button factory for awhile while I was in the service. We had a button factory in Lansing where they cut the shells and everything.

DNR: Really – like a pearl button factory?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: Neat.

DNR: Was there outhouses at the camp?

Raymond: We had big latrines. We had running water and everything though.

DNR: Where did the wastewater go?

Raymond: It was hooked up with the McGregor water lines.

DNR: So you had running water in the latrines?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: Do you remember when you were paid?

Raymond: I think we got eight dollars and the rest went home.

DNR: Was that at the end of the month?

Raymond: I can't tell you, but I think so though. I know most of us would wait and then our mothers would send the money back to us.

DNR: So you got \$8.00 and \$22.00 went home?

Raymond: My mother would send me back \$10-\$15 every once in a while.

DNR: And how did you spend that money?

Raymond: Well, we went to the movies a lot down in McGregor for ten cents, and I think it was ten cents over in Cherokee. Ice cream mostly, and hot chocolate. I never drank any.

DNR: Was there other guys that did?

Raymond: Oh yeah, some of 'em did.

DNR: What kind of movies did you go see?

Raymond: Movies? Whatever come. I like westerns the best. I still like westerns on TV. That's the only thing I watch on TV. Gunsmoke, stuff like that.

DNR: So, could you make the cash last the whole month?

Raymond: I didn't have no trouble, no. In fact, I used to lend it out to guys.

DNR: Were they pretty good about paying you back?

Raymond: Oh yeah.

DNR: So, was it pretty good money that you got to keep \$8.00 a month?

Raymond: It was plenty.

DNR: So, how did that make you feel to have that money?

Raymond: Oh, I don't know – we'd go down and get hot chocolate for a nickel and malted milks, I think that was a quarter at most. Ice cream cones were three scoops for a nickel in some places.

DNR: So, was that at shops in McGregor you'd get the ice cream or the hot chocolate?

Raymond: Yeah, McGregor it was a pretty good town. Some of the guys used to – way down into town on the left side was the tavern – a lot of the guys hung out there. I went in there a few times and drank pop.

DNR: Was there a canteen at the camp? What kind of things did they have there?

Raymond: Yeah. Pop and everything you wanted. I don't think they had hamburgers and stuff.

DNR: Some of the camps had coupon books for the canteens. Did your camp have that?

Raymond: I can't remember.

DNR: Do you remember what your days off were?

Raymond: We had weekends off.

DNR: If you had Sunday off, what did you do?

Raymond: I'd go home to my folks – that'd be about it though.

DNR: Do you remember going to church?

Raymond: I never did go much until after I got out of the army. Now I never miss. My late wife straightened me up on it.

DNR: The camp was pretty much right in town?

Raymond: It was only a couple blocks, actually only four blocks down to the theatre.

DNR: Where was the theatre at in town?

Raymond: I go by there all the time. I think the marquee is still there. It's about half way downtown.

DNR: And where was the camp at in Cherokee?

Raymond: Out in the country a little ways. We'd walk to town though.

DNR: How far out? Was it north of town?

Raymond: I'd say west.

DNR: How long did it take to walk into town?

Raymond: Not very long – I can't tell you.

DNR: What was the typical day of work like?

Raymond: What I done was on survey crew. All I done was survey lines and did the elevation and everything like that. Then I'd take my drawings into the camp and draw contour lines for the farmers for fence lines and stuff like that.

DNR: Do you remember what time you started in the morning?

Raymond: Eight o'clock, I suppose. I remember we had a bunch of guys from Missouri and there was two on my survey crew. In the early fall of the year, they was always stealin' corn out of the corn fields because boy that was a big feast for them.

DNR: And what they steal the corn from? Cornfields?

Raymond: Yeah, we'd be surveying right near a cornfield and they'd go in a grab a couple ears of corn and we'd boil the corn and eat the corn.

DNR: So, how late did you work in the afternoon?

Raymond: I think we was home by four o'clock.

DNR: Were there sports activities?

Raymond: No, not too much.

DNR: Was there any competitions between the camps?

Raymond: No.

DNR: Did they play basketball?

Raymond: No.

DNR: Was there any boxing or horseshoes?

Raymond: Not that I know of. I think maybe horseshoes, but I just can't remember. We used to go swimming a lot. At Cherokee, in the river. I think they had a pool there too.

DNR: Who controlled the stove?

Raymond: We had night watchmen at night. Different guys I think. I watched it once in a while, had to put coal in it. We had night check too. We had to be in at a certain hour.

DNR: Do you remember what time that was?

Raymond: Ten o'clock I think.

DNR: What happened if you weren't in by then?

Raymond: Oh, I don't know what they done to the guys really. We'd lie for one another though.

Raymond: That guys is Reynolds. We called him Peg Leg, I'm not sure why.

DNR: And he was one of the Army officers?

Raymond: Uh huh, we never had no trouble with them though.

Raymond: There's the swimming pool at Cherokee.

DNR: Was that in a city park?

Raymond: South side of town, I'm not sure though.

DNR: I see Bridal Veil Falls and Pictured Rocks here. Did you work any on the trails going down to them?

Raymond: That's what I did at Pikes Peak was mostly worked on the trails.

DNR: Did you pretty much have to carve the trails from beginning to end or was there anything there to start with?

Raymond: Oh, they had trails there. We just fixed 'em up.

Raymond: Here's the officers we had. They were in Cherokee. The camp itself was run by the army. That's why we had to wear army clothes.

DNR: So, the officers, were they pretty good guys?

Raymond: Oh yeah, nothing wrong with them.

DNR: What's that picture?

Raymond: Some of the guys, I don't know where that's taken at. I can't read it either. There was different crews – there was the civilians in different crews, yeah, there's a foreman there. I can't remember anybody having an accident.

DNR: How long were you at the McGregor camp for?

Raymond: Nine months probably.

DNR: Then you were at Cherokee the rest of the time?

Raymond: Yeah. I liked Cherokee the best. It had all new buildings, except it was a long ways from home.

DNR: Once you went out to Cherokee how did you get home from there?

Raymond: Oh, I didn't come home so often. Somebody had a car, one of the guys, his name was Heiderschite, he was a foreman, he had a car. I come home with him a couple times.

DNR: Was he also from Lansing?

Raymond: No, he was from Holy Cross.

DNR: If problems took place among the men in the camp how would they be resolved?

Raymond: I don't know. We never had no problems. It was a different bunch of people in those days.

DNR: If someone got in trouble for breaking the rules, what would happen to them?

Raymond: Everyone was real good. It'd be nice if they could have some of that right today. There was no trouble with anybody really. Like I said, Bill Pape and another guy had a fight – that's the only fight I saw. Bill Pape, he was a friend of mine and I think he lost the fight.

DNR: Do you remember what they fought about?

Raymond: No.

DNR: Would people who were lazy would they be punished?

Raymond: I don't think so – not too bad.

DNR: Was there anyone that went AWOL from camp?

Raymond: Oh yeah, once in a while.

DNR: Then what would happen?

Raymond: They got kicked out or what, no idea.

DNR: Was there educational or vocational training?

Raymond: Well, they had different programs. I took up developing pictures and stuff like that.

DNR: When were the classes held?

Raymond: At nighttime.

DNR: Do you remember who the teacher was?

Raymond: I can't even remember my own name.

DNR: Do you remember any of the Local Experienced Men?

Raymond: Local Experiences around camp. We had that fight and stuff. Doing KP, I hated that. We had coal burning stoves, we had to tear them all apart and clean the inside and everything. The lids, scraped 'em off and everything like that. We scrubbed floors with a brush and waxed them with hard wax. We kept them clean.

DNR: Do you remember how often you had to clean the stoves?

Raymond: They would walk in and bedcheck you. You had to have them made so tight. They'd throw a coin on the covers and the coin had to bounce. Oh they were strict.

DNR: Would they check the beds everyday?

Raymond: Quite often, I couldn't tell you if it was every day. There was one officer, oh man, he was strict on that. He'd always raise cain on that. You get him out of camp and downtown you couldn't meet a nicer guy. He was a GI though.

DNR: How did you get along with the men and the army people that were in charge of the camp?

Raymond: Good, I never had no trouble with nobody.

DNR: What were the main projects the camp was involved in at McGregor?

Raymond: We worked on farms, most of 'em. Building fences and terraces and dams, they're not dams, but they held the soil back. I never was involved in stuff like that though.

DNR: What were you involved in?

Raymond: I was involved in surveying, and was down in the park there for a little while.

DNR: Did you receive training for surveying?

Raymond: No, I just picked it up with the guys I was working with.

DNR: How did you get chosen to be on the survey crew?

Raymond: No idea.

DNR: Did you use these skills after you left the CCC?

Raymond: No.

DNR: Was there any other skills that you learned that you used after you left the CCC?

Raymond: No. When I was in the army I was in the surveying crew, but we didn't do nothing. In the army, we surveyed where to put the big guns but I never done much of that. I was a forward observer in the army most of the time.

DNR: What projects did you work on out at Pikes Peak?

Raymond: On trails mostly, and if I remember right they weren't allowed to use the mower on the mounds. I don't know what we had for mowers. No idea. Seemed like we had a little knife about that long we used to knock the weeds down. On the darn trails we had to be awful careful of Poison Ivy. A lot of Poison Ivy down there at McGregor. We did whatever. This is Milo Peterson. He was a pretty nice man.

DNR: Was he the foreman?

Raymond: Yeah. He was the parks, he wasn't with the CC camp.

DNR: I read how the road at Pikes Peak was moved. Did you work on that project?

Raymond: No.

DNR: Who were the leaders at the site where you were working?

Raymond: Just Milo Peterson. I can't think of the guys name that he had working with him. I can't remember who the CC guys were neither.

DNR: Did you have reveille?

Raymond: Yeah, every morning. I'm pretty sure we did.

DNR: Do you remember what time it was?

Raymond: I suppose seven o'clock, but I have no idea.

DNR: Did you have a mess hall?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: So, at the camp in McGregor was it all buildings or tents?

Raymond: All buildings.

DNR: How did you get your work assignments?

Raymond: Whatever they put me on.

DNR: They just told you to go?

Raymond: I didn't know I was going to the park until they told me I was going.

DNR: How did the foremen get their jobs?

Raymond: What kind of guys were they? Real good guys, everyone one of them.

DNR: Was there some unpopular jobs?

Raymond: KP.

DNR: Why was that unpopular?

Raymond: And I think cleaning the latrines. That wasn't a very good job neither, I guess.

DNR: Were those jobs ever used for punishment or were they just randomly assigned?

Raymond: Just told 'em to do it.

DNR: What kind of equipment did you use?

Raymond: I couldn't tell you. Just regular mops and everything. Scrubbing those floors we used bar wax and a brush. We kept them floors clean.

DNR: So, with your surveying equipment did you have to sign out for it every day or how did you get that?

Raymond: We just had it in our truck all the time.

DNR: Do you have any contact with any other workers you knew in the CCC?

Raymond: There's a guy in town here I was in the CCC camp with. I never was around him though.

DNR: What's his name?

Raymond: Heiderschite. Leonard Heiderschite. And there's a Leon Hutch. He's in a home now.

DNR: Was there city kids and country kids in the camp?

Raymond: Oh yeah, I don't know. I couldn't tell you who it was. Most of them were from towns and cities. A lot of them were from Dubuque.

DNR: And did everyone get along pretty well?

Raymond: Oh yeah. We had to. Like I said, I only seen that one fight.

DNR: Were there any minorities in the camp or was it mostly white guys?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: Do you remember any injuries to yourself or someone else?

Raymond: No.

DNR: Did anything you learned in the camp help you when you left?

Raymond: When I got in the survey crew, when I went in the army I was an anti-tank gunner, then they read my records and I was on the survey crew so they put me in the army when I was over seas, on the survey crew and we surveyed where to put the big cans. But we never done hardly any of that though.

DNR: Do you recall anyone getting diseases?

Raymond: Disease? Not bad.

DNR: Was there any rodent or insect problems?

Raymond: Not that I know of.

DNR: Did you get a chance to work in the community?

Raymond: No. Nighttime we all hung out downtown at the popcorn stand. Had a gal that worked there, I always wondered whatever happened to her.

DNR: Did you have any other contact with the local communities?

Raymond: No.

DNR: Were there dances?

Raymond: Dances? I never danced until she started me.

DNR: Was there any types of fellowship organizations like the Masons, Elks, or Oddfellows in the camps?

Raymond: Not that I know of.

DNR: So, you've mentioned some girls from town. Can you tell me more about your contact with them and how you met them?

Raymond: Oh, popcorn girls. She's a friend of that other girl. I took that picture out of here though. "A very nice girl, but so changeable therefore we have extracted her likeness from this space and dedicate this space to her memory." The guy that she was sweet on, he got killed in the service, he was a pilot. These are all popcorn girls.

DNR: So these girls all just came down to the popcorn stand?

Raymond: Yeah, that's were we met them all – at the popcorn stand.

DNR: That was in Cherokee?

Raymond: Cherokee.

DNR: Was there the same type of thing in McGregor?

Raymond: Here's a popcorn girl – the main one- right there.

DNR: Did the girls like to meet the CCC guys?

Raymond: Oh yeah. The CC guys were good guys.

DNR: What did you do with the girls after you met them at the popcorn stand? Did you take them to the movies or anything?

Raymond: No, we just talked to them mostly. I never went with nobody really.

DNR: What do you think the community thought about the CCC camp in McGregor?

Raymond: I think they liked it. It was good for the town, as far as I'm concerned.

DNR: Do you remember how many guys were in the CCC camp?

DNR: Was there any problems or rivalry between the local boys and the CCC boys?

Raymond: None at all that I know of.

DNR: So, it didn't bother them that you were meeting all their girls?

Raymond: No. Bonnie: Years ago they got along better than they do now.

DNR: Did you mail letters home?

Raymond: See, there's one of the popcorn girls there.

DNR: You were quite the good lookin' young man. I like that hair. Did you ever mail letters home?

Raymond: Some, asking for money. My folks they weren't real bad off. They weren't good though.

DNR: Your Dad was able to keep having work?

Raymond: Yeah, my Dad worked and he got laid off where he worked at the lumber yard so he made a saw rig and went around sawing wood. He got fifty cents a cord for sawing wood. Us kids would pile it in the shed and buildings for ten cents a cord. But ten cents was ten cents then though.

DNR: Was there a post office in the camp?

Raymond: I don't think so.

DNR: Did you pretty much just see the girls every evening and on the weekends?

Raymond: We was downtown almost every night.

DNR: What were your first impressions when you arrived at McGregor at the CCC Camp?

Raymond: I kind of wondered about it, how it would be. But I knew different guys that were in there and they all liked it so I mixed right in with them. I had no trouble at all with that. I wished I could remember. I can't remember nothin' anymore.

DNR: What did you think when you first arrived out at Pikes Peak to work there?

Raymond: I liked it. Milo Peterson, I liked him right away. He was a wonderful man. If everyone was like him it would be a pretty good country.

DNR: Had you ever been to Pikes Peak before or to McGregor?

Raymond: I don't think so.

DNR: How were you assigned to that camp?

Raymond: They just sent me there is all I know.

DNR: Do you remember what condition the park was in when you arrived? Did it need a lot of work?

Raymond: A lot of weeds, but it was in good shape. Like I said, them mounds, I just can't remember, it seemed like we wasn't allowed to mow on them.

DNR: We still can't mow on them. We trim them with a weedeater about three times a summer.

Raymond: We'd go around and cut the big weeds around the edge.

DNR: What's the reason why?

Raymond: Because if you mow over them it can damage their shape – it packs them down more.

Raymond: Most of them buildings there, I think the CCC built those buildings for.

DNR: You showed me a picture of the quarry, is that where the stone from the shelter came from?

Raymond: Could be, that was built before I got there. They had a big men's or women's latrine there. They tore that down, I wonder why.

DNR: Was it this one?

Raymond: Yeah.

DNR: It got torn down in 1990. The smell from it would drift up to the store. Then they put up the new restroom building behind the store.

DNR: Do you remember anything about these boys that would dress up like Indians?

Raymond: I don't remember nothing like that.

DNR: Is this the kind of wall that you built?

Raymond: Yeah. I never done nothing like that though. That's CCC work there.

DNR: It holds the dirt back where the McGregor landfill driveway is.

Raymond: That holds the soil back. We used to build dams, used to call them wear notch dams out on the farms to hold the soil back. I never was involved in any of that stuff.

DNR: Do you remember this building, the Peak Inn? It was the first concession stand at Pikes Peak.

Raymond: We went down and seen that last time we was there. They told us about it and we went down and seen it.

DNR: The only old picture we have of it is this one and no one knows where it was at or anything because it's been moved.

Raymond: Yep, it's down the hill towards town.

DNR: Do you think this is one of the CCC guys?

Raymond: No idea. From the looks of that truck I don't know. That's pretty old. It is pretty old with the car. Before the thirties.

DNR: So, you don't remember anything about the Peak Inn? That's okay, I just figured it was worth an ask.

DNR: Back to my questions. What do you remember about making the trails in the park?

Raymond: All I know is they laid those logs down and put dirt behind them and drove stakes in front of them to hold them in place – that's about all I can tell you.

DNR: Did you do any work to develop the campground?

Raymond: Not really much. Just on the trails and that mostly.

DNR: What was your most memorable experience from your time in the CCC? What do you remember the most?

Raymond: CCC Camp? I told you, the first meal. There was just, we'd go out and work and come back to the camp, clean up and go down and eat – lay around and go downtown and putter around and go back home. It was a good life. It's too bad they can't have it now and keep all the dope out of it.

DNR: The first meal, did that make you feel pretty good about what you were starting out on?

Raymond: Yeah, I'll never forget that first meal.

DNR: What do you think was your biggest accomplishment?

Raymond: Learning how to get along with everybody else, but we done that in school too.

DNR: How do you think your life was changed by enrolling in the CCC's?

Raymond: It kept me out of trouble, kept me busy doing something but I never did get in no trouble though. It was something to do, and we made our \$30 a month. Now they get \$30 an hour.

DNR: What do you think you would have done if you would not have joined the CCC?

Raymond: No idea. My brothers worked on the farm just for the meals, for room and board.

DNR: Did you have any strange or odd experiences at the camp?

Raymond: The first day, I come home with a guy and one of the guys whistled for me, this guy over in the car won't keep his mouth shut for two minutes all the way home. He was right, he never did either. I'm talking about Hutch. Yak, yak yak all the way home.

DNR: What did you do when you left the CCC?

Raymond: I got out of CCC camp and I worked in a place they called the button factory making melts and stuff out of walnut shells. They had to cut them and send them down and us sent 'em down.

DNR: Was that in Lansing?

Raymond: Yeah. Then I decided to join the air force. Three of us were going to join the Air Force and I couldn't get in. They said I had TB. It kind of scared me a little bit. I come home and I didn't tell nobody. What was wrong with me was when I was sanding walnuts down all that dust went down my lungs. I caught hell from doctors that said you go get more x-rays. I got more x-rays and everything was all right. Then I got drafted in the army. I went in the army and then I joined the paratroops. I was a paratrooper in the army.

DNR: When did you join the army?

Raymond: 1942.

DNR: And how long were you in for?

Raymond: Three years and three months?

DNR: I presume you went and fought in World War II. Where did you serve at?

Raymond: England, France, I was in the Battle of The Bulge. I was one of the guys that was trapped in there. You heard about that didn't you?

DNR: I've heard a little about it but tell me more.

Raymond: I was one of the guys.

DNR: So, what happened, how did you get trapped?

Raymond: The Germans surrounded us in Bastogne. Patton come and got us out. All we heard was "I hope Patton comes." The Germans had us surrounded and wanted us to surrender and our general wouldn't surrender. One of those guys said "Those poor damn Germans they got us surrounded." Oh man, that was terrible.

DNR: When you came back from the war what did you do?

Raymond: I worked in the button factory. All I did was put buttons on shells and stuff. Then, I asked for a pay raise and I couldn't get it so I quit. I went down and talked to a guy to find me a job. He said why don't you look at the conservation commission, and I asked them and I got on right away. I worked 37 years with the conservation commission. In Lansing I worked the fisheries and then I went with wildlife and worked out in the woods a lot. That's me there, putting fish in the lake down at Lake MacBride.

DNR: When did your 37 years there end?

Raymond: I was in Lansing until 1970, then went with the wildlife.

DNR: Did you retire from the conservation commission?

Raymond: Yeah, I've been retired for twenty some years.

DNR: When did you retire?

Raymond: 1983.

DNR: What did you like most about your time in camp?

Raymond: What'd I like? I liked everything; I had no trouble at all.

DNR: And you said you were promoted to assistant leader? Can you tell me about that?

Raymond: I was just in charge of a crew – kind of a foreman like, but I only had one or two guys under me.

DNR: How did you get promoted to that?

Raymond: I was the only one left that knew how to do it, I guess.

DNR: What are your favorite memories of the CCC?

Raymond: Popcorn girls. It was a good life. I had no complaints at all about CC camp. A lot of those guys got in trouble with the officers for not keeping their beds in shape and all that but I never had no trouble.

DNR: What would happen when they got in trouble with the officers?

Raymond: Oh, nothing really happened. They got put in KP in the kitchen or something – cleaning the latrine or something like that.

DNR: So, was the KP and cleaning the latrines was that always a punishment or did you have to do it anyway?

Raymond: Kind of, we took turns at it anyways. I had KP several times anyway. You eat good then, though.

DNR: So, how old are you now?

Raymond: 32.

DNR: 32, right. You don't look a day over it.

Raymond: 87.

DNR: There is probably things we didn't have down here that was question wise? Is there anything else you want to tell me about?

Raymond: Not really, see I can't remember nothing anymore. I was in a car wreck and I got banged up pretty good, a broken neck, had two blood clots on my brain and then I got married a couple times. My first wife died and she pulled me out of it.

DNR: How long have you two been married for?

Raymond: 45 years. Six years. Febraury 28, 2002. That's her birthday. That's her birthday present. I told her that's the best birthday present she ever got. I was married 41 years. Bonnie: I was divorced 21 years before I decided to get married and then I hesitated.

DNR: Was there a lot of guys from Lansing you knew that went down to the CCC camp in McGregor?

Raymond: There was five or six of us. Lansing, New Albin here.

DNR: And you said you graduated from high school and then went to the CCC?

Raymond: Lansing, 1938, and then that fall I went to the CCC camp.